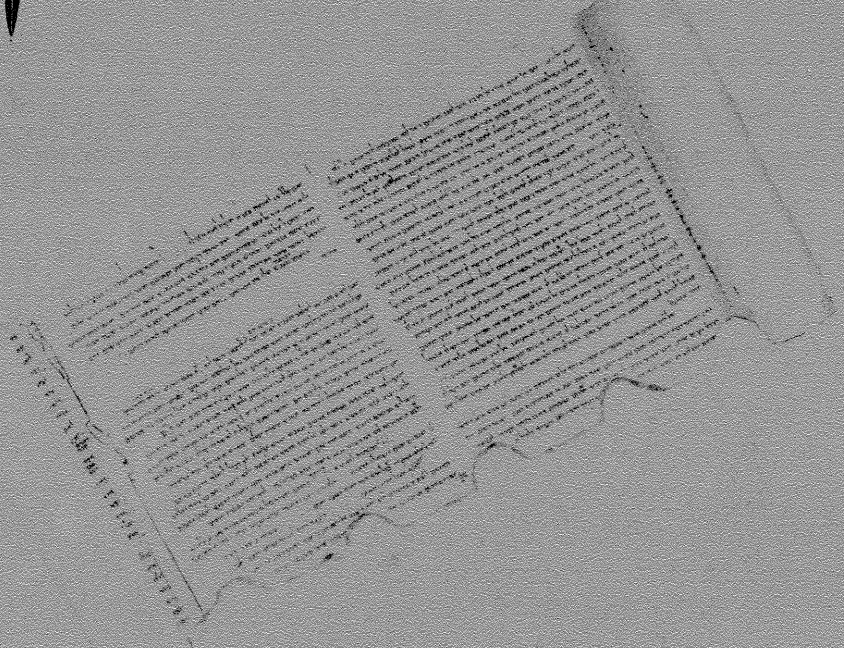




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Quarterly

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M. H. Otto

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## THE COMMUNICATION OF ATTRIBUTES IN CHRIST

Here is one of those doctrines of the Scriptures in which it becomes evident whether we are theologians who are guided by Scripture alone or not. All theologians should be Scripture-theologians, for only that which is Scriptural is truly theological.

In this doctrine of the Communication of Attributes we are face to face with a doctrine which is declared in the Scriptures to be a mystery: "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." 1 Tim. 3:16. We poor sinful men cannot expect to be able to fathom the depths into which this doctrine leads us. We must be ready to believe what God tells us in His Word even though we cannot explain before our reason how these things can be. And we shall be thankful that we are privileged to be led by the Scriptures, for that is to be led by the Holy Spirit.

In preparing this essay let me say that I have made a study of the subject as presented especially by two great theologians of our church in America: Dr. F. Pieper, in Christian Dogmatics, Vol. II, where the presentation of this doctrine occupies some 150 pages; and Dr. Adolf Hoenecke, Dogmatik, Band III, where the presentation occupies about 28 pages. Both of these Scripture-theologians show that there is a great difference between Zwinglian and Calvinistic doctrine in this matter, on the one

hand, and the Lutheran doctrine, on the other. Calvinistic or Reformed theology does indeed confess the Incarnation and the two natures in Christ over against Unitarianism; but over against the Lutherans it denies the communication of divine attributes to the human nature of Christ. Dr. Pieper, for example, goes to great lengths to show how inconsistent it is to confess the union of the two natures in Christ, as the Reformed do, and yet deny the communication of attributes. Zwingli did so on the basis of a rationalistic axiom: "Finitum non est capax infiniti." So he denies to the human nature of Christ the divine attributes of omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience, among others, claiming that the human nature of Christ would be destroyed if these attributes were actually given to it. However, he then leaves out of consideration that an axiom that may well apply in the natural realm does not apply in the super-natural. And this matter is in the realm of the super-natural. Also, as these theologians point out, Zwingli denied to the human nature of Christ the attribute of omnipresence with his eye on his false doctrine of the Lord's Supper. And also it seems quite evident that Zwingli wanted to have at least some glory for himself as a Reformer. He was not going to let Luther have all the glory. So he had to differ with Luther in some things and pursue his own way separate from Luther.

Party spirit is a thing that one may easily catch. And in following this party spirit succeeding theologians of the Reformed persuasion have followed in the footsteps of Zwingli and Calvin, although the error of their doctrine is plain as can be

if they would only let Scripture speak to them and not give way to rationalism. A sad note in the history of our Lutheran Church is the fact that Melanchthon, who had done so much for the cause of the Scriptural truth, in his later years also was smitten by rationalism and gave way to the Reformed doctrine in this matter, though he wanted to keep it secret for a time. This became evident, on the one hand, by his silence as regards confessing the truth in this doctrine, and, on the other hand, by his willingness to make compromises with the Reformed. But thanks be to God, there were those who saw this big mistake in Melanchthon and exposed the Philippists, as Dr. Bente brings out so well in his Historical Introduction to the Book of Concord, in treating the matter of the Crypto-Calvinistic Controversy, pp. 172-192.

And now, after this introduction, we proceed to the matter itself.

The doctrine of the communion of natures in Christ is founded upon clear statements of Scripture, such as: John 1:14, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.": Col. 2:9: "In Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Heb. 2:14: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same."

"The Word was made flesh", i. e., God became man. After the incarnation, to be man is just as peculiar to Him as to be God. This means the most intimate and close communion of natures in Him. And so the attributes of the one nature are com-

municated to the other.

Nestorius denied the communion of natures. Only in name, according to him, was Mary's Son partaker of the Logos. And the Calvinists, while admitting that the person of the Logos is given to the human nature in an indirect communion of natures, yet deny a direct, real, true communion of the natures.

In the person of Christ the Godhead was not changed into man, but there is an inner communion between the two natures so that Mary was indeed the mother of the Lord, the Son of God. Elizabeth was right when she said, "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Luke 1:43. In Christ it is indeed true that Man is God and God is Man.

Here we may mention the peculiar contention of Zwingli for his alloiosis, i. e., that one must make an exchange in the Scriptures of expressions, so that when the Scriptures say "Christ died", one must take it to be so that the word "Christ" here stands only for the human nature and not for the God-man. Zwingli's contention is like this: When the subject of the statement in the Scriptures is a word that designates the entire Christ and the predicate asserts something human of Him, then one must substitute the human nature for the subject; or if the subject is Christ and something divine is said of Him in the predicate, then one must substitute the divine nature for the subject. Luther had to warn strongly against the alloiosis of Zwingli.

The communication of attributes is the consequence of the communion of natures, i. e., the sharing of the attributes of the one nature with the other. And this communication of attributes has been treated under three genera: the Genus Idiomaticum, the Genus Majestaticum, and the Genus Apotelesmaticum.

In treating this matter one must not forget that there is a difference as regards the relationship of essence to attributes in God and man. As regards the Logos, essence and attributes are identical, i. e., God is omnipotence, omniscience, love, etc. But in man there is a difference between essence and attributes, so that the attributes are to be differentiated from the essence. Thus, in the second Genus (Majestaticum) the divine attribute can be given to the human nature without becoming part of the essence of the human nature. To bring an example: That which is proprium of fire never becomes proprium of iron; yet when iron and fire are joined the fire gives to the iron the power to give light.

### GENUS IDIOMATICUM

The Genus Idiomaticum consists in this that the attributes of both natures are communicated to the Person of the God-man, to the concretum of the person as also to the concretum of the nature. Dr. A. L. Graebner puts it this way: "Thus attributes of either nature are ascribed to the entire person of Christ, divine attributes are predicated of the concretum of His human nature, and human attributes are ascribed to the concretum of His divine nature."

This Genus is presented in Scripture passages as the following: Heb. 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, and forever." 1 Cor. 2:8: "Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Luke 2: 4-11, where His birth is related, and He is said to be Christ, the Lord. Matt. 1:23, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

In such passages Christ, the Lord of glory, is spoken of, i. e., the entire theanthropic person or the incarnate Word. He is named partly according to the divine nature and partly according to the human. And to Him are ascribed partly divine attributes (eternity, Heb. 13:8), partly human (be crucified, die, 1 Cor. 2:8). These passages give the right to ascribe to the entire Person of the God-man human attributes and divine attributes. So it is Biblical to say: Christ, the God-man is born, suffered, died; Christ, the eternal Son of God, is crucified; Christ, the God-man is eternal, has created all things; Mary's Son is omniscient, is Creator of heaven and earth. If it were so that we only dared say, Christ the man died, or, Christ the Son of God created all things, then there would be no communication of attributes there and the natures would be separated in a Nestorian and Calvinistic manner.

This Genus is directed against the Nestorian error and the Alloiosis of Zwingli.



1. To the concretum of the Person of Christ the attributes of both natures are given: Heb. 13:8, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today and forever." Rom. 9:5, "Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever."

2. To the concretum of the divine nature (God, God's Son, Logos) the attributes of the human nature are given: Acts 20:28, "To feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood." Gal. 2:20, "The Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."

3. To the concretum of the human nature the attributes of the divine nature are ascribed: John 6:62, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?" John 8:58, "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." 1 Cor. 15:47, "The second Man is the Lord from heaven."

The subject in all these sayings is never the abstract divine nature or human nature. Scripture never uses that mode of speech, e.g., Scripture does not say: The divine nature died, or, The human nature is before Abraham, or, The human nature ascends up where it was before.

In speaking concerning the entire Christ the Scriptures often say according to which nature the particular thing took place, e.g., Rom. 9:5: "Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." 1 Pet. 3:18: "Christ... being put to death in the flesh."

## GENUS MAJESTATICUM OR AUICHEMATICUM

The Genus Majesticum consists in this that the Son of God communicates the attributes of His divine nature, the majesty and glory of the same, to the assumed human nature for common possession and use, and so that He is truly called by divine names.

A. L. Graebner: "Though the human nature in the person of Christ remains truly human, yet all the divine properties and perfections and the honor and glory thereto pertaining are as truly communicated to His human nature, so that the perfections which the divine nature has as essential attributes, the human nature has as communicated attributes, such as omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence."

According to Col. 2:9, the fullness of the godhead dwells in Him bodily. This, then, is said of Him according to His human nature.

In Psalm 45:7, it is stated that "God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." This is speaking of the Christ according to the human nature. And Acts 10:38 tells us that God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost and with power—power to work miracles. A majesty was given to Him according to the human nature, a majesty and glory which He had from eternity, John 17:5, which showed itself in the miracles He did, John 2:11, and which is that of the only-begotten of the Father, John 1:14 — a glory infinita, immensa, i. e., the true divine majesty.

To Him are given divine names, as in Luke 1: 35 where He who is born of the Virgin Mary, i. e., the human Christ, is called the Son of God. And Acts 2:36 tells us that Christ is made Lord — according to the human nature.

Then there are the passages that ascribe to Him divine attributes —

Omnipotence: John 17:2, "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh." Matt. 28:18: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." 1 Pet. 4:11: "To Christ be praise and dominion for ever and ever."

Omniscience: Col. 2:3: "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." John 2:25: "And needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man." John 21:17: "Lord, Thou knowest all things."

Omnipresence: Matt. 28:20: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." John 14: 23: "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep my words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Likewise, divine works are ascribed to Him: "For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself, and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also because He is the Son of man." John 5:26.27. Sitting at the right hand of God, Mark 16:19: "He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."

The question now arises, When did this communication begin? Answer: At His conception. All this was given to Him at that time for possession and use. This is expressed dogmatically as follows: Pros ten ktesin and Pros ten chresin. However, there is this difference here: While He had full possession of divine attributes at all times, He did not fully use these attributes until His exaltation.

Now as regards the manner of the communication: It was not a reciprocal communication since the divine nature can experience no change in attributes because it is identical with its attributes. So, the communication is a one-sided one. To the human nature the divine majesty is communicated: Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence, Immutability, etc. However, there is a difference between the operative attributes as omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, and the immanent or quiescent attributes — immutability, eternity. Both kinds are communicated as far as possession is concerned, but the quiescent ones only mediately or by means of the operative attributes. Thus, the possession of omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience brings about the possession also of eternity and immutability. One can say in keeping with Scripture: The humanity of Christ has almighty power, omnipresence, omniscience, eternity, immutability; also, The human nature is almighty, omnipresent, omniscient; but not, The human nature is eternal, immutable. If one were to say this last, then one would be making the Scriptures contradict themselves, for the Scriptures tell us that Christ's human nature began in time, and that He grew. Gerhard uses this illustration here: The soul is in itself undivided and it gives to the

body the power to feel, etc., but not spirituality and immortality.

Through the communication of divine majesty to the human nature the Logos does not lose them, but the Logos remains the subjectum proprium, immediatum, originale of the majesty. The human nature has them only deuteros, namely, through the unio personalis.

Scripture tells us that the purpose for this communication of attributes was the redemption of mankind. Rom. 8:3.4: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." Heb. 7:26: "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." He became this great High Priest in order to offer up Himself for us.

The Calvinists also speak of certain Auchemata or accessions that are communicated to the human nature of Christ. But these are "non essentielles Dei proprietates, sed dona tantum creata et gratiae, ut vocant." Hoenecke, Vol. III, p. 97. The glorification worked thereby does not differ except in quantity from the glorification of the beatific angels and men. To avoid all misunderstanding, therefore, our dogmaticians declare that here it is not a matter of "dona habitualia et finita", but of "vere divina et infinita", as the Scriptures teach: Col. 2:9 quoted previously, and John 3:13:

"No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." The Calvinists, on the contrary, declare definitely that Christ's human nature is not almighty, omniscient, omnipresent. Beza calls the Lutheran doctrine of the "Communicatio idiomatum horrendam, impiissimam et impurissimam blasphemiam." Hoenecke III, p. 98. According to them sentences such as, "The flesh of Christ quickens" are to be explained by Zwingli's Alloiosis, namely this way, "Filius Dei, qui carnem assumpsit, vivificat."

Especially did the Calvinists contend against the doctrine of the omnipresence of Christ, very evidently with an eye on their false doctrine of the Lord's Supper. The controversy was waged first between Luther and Carlstadt; and then between Luther and Zwingli. Zwingli rejected the omnipresence of Christ; Luther affirmed it, both from the words of Scripture concerning the Lord's Supper as also from the words of Scripture concerning the personal union. Zwingli always came up with his Alloiosis. To Zwingli the flesh of Christ was really without meaning. To trust in the death of Christ, according to him, means to trust in God who according to His human nature suffered death; for the flesh profiteth nothing, neither in the bread nor on the cross; also, the blood does not cleanse from sin, but the Spirit.

Luther contended: Jesus Christ is by essence and nature true God and man in one undivided and indivisible Person; also, God's right hand is everywhere. The Calvinists, however, said that God's right hand is a place in heaven where Christ is con-

fined. When Christ appeared to His disciples after the resurrection when they were gathered together behind locked doors, the Calvinists have to go and search somewhere for an opening through which He could make His entry.

We must distinguish between a natural and a personal manner of being in the human nature of Christ. During His earthly life Christ was in a natural manner at one place. But in His exaltation He is everywhere in heaven and in earth: Matt. 18:20: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Eph. 1:22.23: "And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Eph. 4:10: "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." Christ's body in the exaltation does not take up any space. This is a thing, of course, that we cannot understand with our conceptions of space and time.

The chief arguments of the Calvinists were philosophical. "Omne corpus verum in loco est; finitum non est capax infiniti." But, as pointed out previously, this argument is not valid when one is dealing with supernatural matters.

It might be added that the papists teach much as do the Calvinists in this matter.

## GENUS APOTELESMATICUM

The Genus Apotelesmaticum consists in this that in the mediatorial work of Christ each nature works indeed according to its peculiar essence, but always in communion with the other nature.

Graebner, p. 110: "The personal union of the two natures in Christ, the assumption of the human nature by the divine nature in one person, has taken place for the purpose of the salvation of mankind, and in the execution of the works pertaining to His threefold office the entire person has performed and performs what either nature has performed or performs, both natures concurring in such works, each performing in communion with the other that which is proper to itself."

This Genus has its Scriptural foundation in the unio personalis and the communicatio naturarum. By virtue of this the atoning activities can never be such as are performed by the one or the other nature alone.

There are those expressions in Scripture that ascribe the redemptive work and its individual acts to the Savior, designating Him sometimes according to the divine nature, sometimes according to the human nature, and sometimes according to the concretum personae. Sometimes the Scriptures in one and the same passage express the action of the one nature as happening in communion with the other nature.

In 1 John 3:8 it is stated that the Son of God



was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil. Here the expression "Son of God" designates Christ according to the divine nature, and it is stated that He destroys the works of the devil; but He does it as such an One who was manifested. Thus this passage teaches that Christ according to His divine nature, but in communion with the human nature, destroys the works of the devil.

According to Rom. 8:3, the Son of God has condemned sin in the flesh. But in order to do so God sent Him in the likeness of sinful flesh. Thus Christ accomplished this according to the divine nature, but in communion with the human nature. According to Gen. 3:15, the Seed of the woman crushes the head of the serpent. "The Seed of the woman" designates Christ according to the human nature. But only the Deity has the power to do this. And so we can say: The humanity of Christ does it, but in communion with the Deity.

According to 1 Cor. 15:3; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 5:2 Christ died for our sins, and Christ gave Himself for our sins. Thus we see that the human nature of Christ performs a redemptive work of endless value. This it does because His human nature works in communion with the eternal Deity.

Each nature performs what is peculiar to it, and the other nature is not idle, but works along. Thus, suffering is peculiar to the human nature; but in the suffering of the flesh of Christ the divine nature is not idle. The Son of God wills that His human nature should suffer; He permits it, John 10:18;

otherwise it would be impossible. Yes, He permeates it, strengthens the human nature, holds it up and makes the suffering of the human nature His own. Again, the human nature is not active only in the properties essential to it, but also according to the divine majesty communicated to it. From this relationship of both natures in accomplishing our redemption it follows that the redemption is of endless value.

We must speak in keeping with Scripture. Thus we can say, God has purchased us with His own blood; but not, The divine nature shed its blood.

The Calvinists hold that in the official acts of Christ the human nature works only in a human manner and is only the instrument. Danaeus: In performing miracles the human nature of Christ contributes no more than the body of the Apostles did when they performed miracles or the rod of Moses. The Calvinists hold that the works of Christ have nothing to do with the communication of attributes. But according to Scripture the second Genus is the foundation of the redeeming power.

In the Catalog of Testimonies quotations from various ones of the fathers in the Ancient Church are brought, showing that the doctrine of our Lutheran Church agrees with the doctrine of the Ancient Church.

From all of this it follows that adoration was due unto Christ also in the flesh. The wise men did right when they fell down and worshipped the Christ-child. Likewise the blind man whom Jesus healed, John 9:38. And even the otherwise doubting Thomas

must worship Him, saying, "My Lord and my God." John 20:28.

A. M. Harstad

## BOOK REVIEWS

Edward J. Young. Studies in Genesis One. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 105 pp., \$1.25.

(Of the series INTERNATIONAL LIBRARY OF PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY. BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES. J. Marcellus Kik, Editor.)

This is a series of three studies in the first chapter of Genesis. Although it was published in 1964, we feel it merits attention at this time. The author is the well-known professor of Old Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. As in his other writings on the Old Testament, he combines profound learning and penetrating scholarship with a firm belief in the verbal inspiration of the Bible. Consequently his literary contributions are edifying as well as enlightening and informative.

The three studies contained in this volume first appeared in the WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL. In the foreword he candidly states his viewpoint: "In these three studies I have simply endeavored to take the Bible as it stands, and sought to interpret its first chapter. In so doing, I wish

to make it plain that I am no foe of science, but I believe that the facts of the created universe, when rightly interpreted, will prove to be in harmony with the revelation which God has given us in the first chapter of Genesis. "

The first study is entitled "The Relation of the First Verse of Genesis One to Verses Two and Three. " After having discussed both possibilities and having quoted proponents of each, Dr. Young states his conviction that Genesis 1:1 is an independent clause and not a dependent clause. He therefore holds that the first word, b<sup>e</sup>rēshith, is in the absolute state ("In the beginning God created") rather than the construct state ("In the beginning of God's creating"), and supports his position with good evidence. He then proceeds to demonstrate his view that the first verse is a broad and comprehensive statement of the fact of the creation.

The second study is entitled "The Interpretation of Genesis 1:2. " He disavows von Rad's interpretation of ruach Elohim as "Gottessturm" (a fearful storm) and upholds the view which identifies it with the Third Person of the Godhead. He admits that the Hebrew word t<sup>e</sup>hōm may be etymologically related to the name of the Babylonian goddess Tiamat, but states that Moses "used the word . . . in such a way that it was free of any mythological connotations. " (p. 28.) Significantly he later adds: "When we speak of Wednesday or Thursday, for example, we are not consciously rejecting an old mythology. " (p. 29.) By his use of t<sup>e</sup>hōm, then, Moses was neither accepting nor rejecting mythology; he was not concerned with it.

In his careful study of the second verse, Young opposes the pagan mythological interpretation of the word m<sup>e</sup>rachepeth in which God is pictured as "hatching" the world by "brooding" over it. Rather he holds that the piel participle of the verbal root r ch ph is best rendered "hovering." In Deut. 32:11 it is used of an eagle or vulture hovering over its young. He adduces a striking parallel from the Ugaritic poem Aqhat, where in four lines in a passage (I:20,21,30,32) the same verb in the piel is used of the eagles (nshr - same root as the Hebrew word for the bird in Deut. 32:11). He states: "The Spirit is depicted as a living Being, who hovers over the created earth like a bird." (p. 37.)

In the last study, "The Days of Genesis," he makes many good statements. In contrast to the higher critical theory of two distinct creation accounts, which is also endorsed by Walter Wegner of the Old Testament department of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis (see CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, Sept. 1966, pp. 520-537), Young upholds the Mosaic authorship as well as the integrity of Genesis. He declares: "Genesis two is not, nor does it profess to be, a second account of creation. Although it does mention creative acts, it is a sequel to the creation narrative of Genesis one and a preparation for the history of the fall contained in chapter 3." (p. 59.)

While this writer questions Young's interpretation of tol<sup>e</sup>dhoth (Gen. 2:4a) as "things begotten," (p. 59) since the hiphil (active) form would appear to rule out a passive interpretation, his only serious criticism of any portion of this book concerns

the length of the days. We agree with his statement that the word yōm is used in three senses in the two opening chapters: "In the one instance it denotes the light in distinction from the darkness; in the other it includes both evening and morning. In Genesis 2:4b the word is employed in yet another sense, "in the day of the LORD God's making." (p. 104.) (Evidently in the last passage it includes the entire six-day period.) However, we beg to differ with his statement on the same page: "The length of the days is not stated. What is important is that each of the days is a period of time which may legitimately be denominated yom ('day')." We believe that it is clear from the context that the "first" day, and each of the successive days enumerated, must be interpreted as 24-hour periods including both evening and morning, both night and "day" in the more restricted 12-hour sense.

With the exception of the above-mentioned criticism, we would enthusiastically endorse this excellent booklet. So much that has been written on Genesis expresses the modernistic point of view. (Cf. Speiser in the ANCHOR BIBLE, and von Rad, within the last decade.) It is therefore refreshing to read a work such as this, in which the verbal inspiration of the Bible and the Mosaic authorship of Genesis are upheld and ably defended. It is a booklet well worth purchasing, reading, studying, and digesting.

Rudolph E. Honsey

Edward J. Young. The Book of Isaiah. Vol. I.  
Grand Rapids: Eerdmann's Publishing Co., 1965,  
XII and 534 pp., \$7.95.

(A volume of the Old Testament series of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL COMMENTARY. Dr. Young is General Editor of the Old Testament portion of this work.)

Two statements on the paper jacket are helpful in introducing the reader to the series as well as this specific volume. From the back of the jacket we quote:

This new commentary comes into being through the cooperation of Old Testament scholars in England, Australia, Canada, South Africa and the United States under the general editorial direction of Dr. Edward J. Young, distinguished Professor of Old Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. It is looked to by ministers and scholars as an authoritative work which will give direction to conservative Old Testament scholarship for years to come, at last fulfilling the anxious need for a commentary "which, while conversant with the modern critical assaults, draws from the Scripture the ancient faith."

With more specific reference to this volume, we quote from the inside front flap:

This volume is the first of three projected volumes on Isaiah by the distinguished pro-

fessor of Old Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary, Edward J. Young. It is also the first volume to appear of the Old Testament portion of the New International Commentary series (the New Testament portion is edited by F. F. Bruce). The commentary on Isaiah concerns itself not primarily with textual problems, but with the meaning of the text. Dr. Young considers Isaiah the author of the entire prophecy, and consequently seeks for the author's meaning in what he conceives to be an organic whole. He has written his commentary with the minister and the Sunday-school teacher in mind; Hebrew words in the text are few, and technical allusions are restricted to footnotes, special notes, and appendices. The English text of Isaiah is Dr. Young's own, and in it he attempts to bring out clearly the force of the original.

As in his other books, Dr. Young combines excellent scholarship with a reverent attitude to the Bible as the verbally inspired Word of God. Throughout this first volume of his commentary on Isaiah his belief in verbal inspiration is clearly and convincingly set forth. (Cf. his fine statement on p. 30.) He also holds the Masoretic Text (M), which we have in our Hebrew Bible, in high regard. Of significance is his statement on the first page of his appendices (p. 481):

In this present commentary the position is adopted that M is a reliable text. For the most part even the versions, principally B,



support M. M yields a good sense, and when there are divergences upon the part of the versions, these divergences can often be explained. Furthermore, difficult forms in M can now often be explained with the aid of the cognate Semitic languages. Examples of this will be found in the notes. When the orthography of M can be checked with ancient inscriptions, that orthography is often substantiated.

Then he calls the reader's attention to the great importance of the Hebrew syllable and the type of vowel which appears in a certain syllable, and urges the reader who is familiar with the Hebrew language to study the Hebrew vowel charts (p. 482). On the first page in the Preface he acknowledges his debt to Dr. Cyrus H. Gordon, who first introduced Dr. Young to their significance. He concludes his remarks on the Hebrew vowels as we have them in the Masoretic Text with the statement: "If the reader will study the notes carefully in the light of these vowel charts, he will come to understand why the present writer entertains such a high regard for the Masoretic Text." (p. 483.)

Dr. Young approaches his study of the Book of Isaiah with a firm belief in its integrity. No doubt he will further substantiate his position in the subsequent volumes, particularly Vol. III, which will contain at least the greater portion of "Second Isaiah" (chap. 40-66), whose authorship modernistic commentators attribute to a post-exilic writer. (Some even speak of three different authors.) In his INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT, Dr.

Young gives good evidence for his position, particularly on pp. 218-224.

In his Appendix II, the author gives a selected bibliography in which some of the more significant commentators on Isaiah are listed in a generally chronological order. He speaks highly of the commentaries by Gesenius, Delitzsch and a number of others. Of special interest, however, are his remarks about Luther and Calvin (p. 489). We quote:

Martin Luther. The commentary on Isaiah appeared alone in 1528 and then bound with the other prophets in 1532, and in 1534 with the whole Bible. The work is typical of Luther; practical, with many digressions. At the same time the great reformer understood the message of Isaiah, which cannot be said of all commentators. I read Luther both with profit for the understanding and with blessing.

Calvin (1570) wrote what in many respects may be called one of the greatest of the Isaiah commentaries. Calvin has deep insight into the great sweeps of revelation and of the relationship which the individual verses bear to the picture as a whole. Valuable homiletic and expository remarks abound. When Calvin is at his best, he is unsurpassable. He has been my constant companion in the preparation of this commentary.

Throughout this volume, the author gives evi-

dence of the truth of his last statement. Needless to state, in the vast majority of instances he wholeheartedly agrees with that great scholar, whose exegetical works were among his outstanding contributions. The author quotes Calvin when he asserts that fallen man is incapable of doing what God has commanded him (p. 71). Young gives a good exegesis of Is. 1:18, and states: "The doctrine of a forensic justification is found in these words." Throughout his commentary he upholds the doctrine of salvation by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. In the Messianic portions (e.g. chapters 2, 7, 9 and 11) he rejects the modernistic interpretations, which would deny the Messianic content. As might be expected, he discusses the 'almah passage (Is. 7:14) in some detail, devoting six pages to it. He does not limit his discussion to the highly-controversial term 'almah, but also discusses the word translated "Lord" (Adhonai here, not the tetragrammaton YHWH), the interjection hinne, and other words in the passage. He refers to the use of qlmt and btlt, cognates of 'almah and bethulah, in a Ugaritic passage, and also the use of an interjection (hinne) to introduce an important event in both Hebrew and other Semitic literature. But, admitting a similarity in form between the Hebrew and Ugaritic expressions, he states: "What is important . . . is not that the prophet employs a phrase which has also been found in Ugarit; what is important is that he uses this phrase in a context which in significance differs completely from that in which it was found elsewhere." On the basis of the passage (Is. 7:14) as well as the New Testament quotation of fulfillment (Matt. 1:23) he maintains that this is a

In speaking of the grace of God, Young declares: "... the grace of God is sovereign and efficacious; it breaks down all walls of resistance,

In this respect, also, he is a true follower of Calvin. above His grace in his discussion of predestination. sizes the sovereign good pleasure of God over and in 2 Tim. 1:9 and Eph. 3:11. Also, Young emphasizes the words "in Christ Jesus" or "through Christ Jesus" should have been added, as they are or election takes into account the redemptive work of His good pleasure that any are written down for the sovereign good pleasure of God, and it is only statement: "The ground of this predestination is However, he closes that section with the tion to salvation, he makes several good state- doctrine of predestination. Regarding predestination to salvation, he makes several good state-

In his remarks on Is. 4:3, Young sets forth the doctrine of predestination. Regarding predestination to salvation, he makes several good state- tions to salvation, he makes several good state- ments. However, he closes that section with the statement: "The ground of this predestination is the sovereign good pleasure of God, and it is only of His good pleasure that any are written down for or election takes into account the redemptive work of Jesus. The words "in Christ Jesus" or "through Christ Jesus" should have been added, as they are in 2 Tim. 1:9 and Eph. 3:11. Also, Young emphasizes the sovereign good pleasure of God over and above His grace in his discussion of predestination. In this respect, also, he is a true follower of Calvin.

There are many other very commendable passages in this commentary, and few places where the reviewer would take issue with his statements. One might hesitate to agree with the quotation from Calvin under the special note on p. 143, with reference to Is. 3:4, "While the words in themselves might be rightly understood, there are overtones of Calvin's theocratic ideas, which he put into practice in Geneva.

expresses the opinion that "the original form of the prophecy is found in Micah." (p. 112.) However, he maintains that both passages are the inspired Word of God.

prophecy of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, and that 'almāh ought to be translated "virgin" in this passage. In fact, he points out that the word which is usually translated "virgin" (bethūlah) clearly refers to a married woman in Joel 1:8, as anyone who reads that passage must agree. Therefore he concludes: "If Isalah had used this word bethūlah, he would have left us in confusion. . . . Only 'almāh makes clear that the mother was unmarried." (p. 288.)

The author also devotes several pages to a discussion of Is. 9:6. He notes that in the Vulgate, six names for the Messiah are given: Admirabilis, Consiliarius, Deus, Fortis, Pater futuri saeculi, and Princeps pacis. (p. 333). The King James Version gives five: Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. Dr. Young combines the first two names, and thus interprets the passage: Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Father of Eternity, and the Prince of Peace. He thereby interprets the word pele as an adjective modifying yoets (counselor) rather than as a noun. His 13 pages on Is. 9:6 are well worth reading and studying.

The author's interpretation of the Messianic Kingdom in chapter 2 is also sound, and avoids the pitfalls of either the modernistic or the millennial-istic viewpoints, both of which are this-worldly rather than other-worldly, and which do not see in this chapter a picture of the true spiritual peace which Christians already have in this life and which will come to a full fruition and perfect enjoyment in a blissful eternity in heaven. In his discussion of two similar passages (Is. 2:2-4 and Mic. 4:1-3) he

accomplishing that end for which it is designed. It is an irresistible grace, but although it is irresistible, it is yet grace, and so makes the stubborn, recalcitrant heart willing." (p. 199, under Is. 5:4.) The Bible does not teach irresistible grace; on the contrary, there are many passages that show that God's grace can be resisted.

In his treatment of Isaiah chapter 6, Young gives a good exposition of certain portions. We cannot, however, be as cautious as he is in maintaining that the Trinity of God is there set forth. We feel that the trishagion in verse 3, as well as the plural in verse 8 ("who will go for us") clearly sets forth the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

However, our most serious difference with the author, not only in this chapter, but in the entire book, is with regard to his statement on p. 259, in which he sets forth the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation in his comments on Is. 6:10:

Now, if God foresees that such a particular result will be the consequence, it is clear that that particular result is certain and that it has already been determined by God. From this conclusion there is no escape. In His mysterious wisdom God had foreordained that this people would not respond to the blessed overtures of the gospel. In His sovereign good pleasure He had passed them by, not ordaining them unto life eternal, and for their sin had ordained them to dishonor and wrath.

To that statement we must object.

There are a few typographical errors in the book, few enough to detract only slightly from an otherwise attractive and legible format. There is no need of pointing them out, for the reader himself will discover them. Some of the errors are in Hebrew words in that script; in a few cases letters are reversed, and in one case upside down (p. 448, note 87). In general, however, the book is very readable in every respect. It can be used to good advantage by laymen as well as clergymen, and by those unfamiliar with the Hebrew language as well as those familiar with it. Most of this writer's objections to the book have been listed; only a few of the many commendable passages have been mentioned. On the whole, he would enthusiastically recommend it.

The undersigned read this book with the Hebrew text of the first 18 chapters before him, and with a lexicon and grammar within reach. He purposely resisted the temptation of re-reading earlier reviews in order not to be swayed by the opinions of other reviewers. It was a stimulating and profitable experience to read this book by a scholar and theologian who is thoroughly trained in the other ancient languages, and so can bring them to bear on the language of the Old Testament when they are pertinent, but who above all approaches the study of the Holy Scriptures with an attitude of humble reverence and personal faith in what those Scriptures teach. This first volume of Dr. Young's forthcoming 3-volume commentary deserves to be stocked by our Lutheran Synod Book Store and to be owned and studied by our people.

Rudolph E. Honsey

Wisdom For Today, Arthur E. Beck, Editor: Swan-ville, Minn., 1966, xi and 401 pp., \$3.95.

For a number of years Pastor Beck has been translating Prof. George Stoeckhardt's exegetical works into English, and in so doing has rendered a service to the church. "Wisdom For Today" is his latest effort, being an English translation of Stoeckhardt's Biblische Geschichte (New Testament Bible History).

The book is thus an exposition of the four gospels, arranged into a harmony, and the book of Acts. One gathers that Dr. Stoeckhardt intended this book for young readers, to be used as a simple textbook, setting forth the outline of the life of Jesus and the early history of the church. As such it is really nothing more than a simple re-telling of the gospel story and the life and work of the early Christians, with a minimum of exegetical comments added. To designate it as a "commentary" would be mis-leading.

Pastor Beck, in his capacity as editor, has broken up the text into small paragraphs and has then applied the catechetical method, prefacing each paragraph with a simple question relating to its content, and then making the text read as an answer. Since the book was no doubt intended for use with children, this arrangement is quite effective and should prove helpful. The translation appears to be faithfully and well done.

For those who want a simple, straight-forward Bible history (New Testament) the book will do well. It is, however, a paperback edition, and one of



considerable size; and this may cause the binding to crack and come loose. The price is comparable to other paperbacks of similar size.

Julian G. Anderson

De Vries, Peter. The Mackerel Plaza. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1958.

Hartman, Olov. Holy Masquerade. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963.

Still the most stunning literary portrait of the ministry gone astray is that found in Sinclair Lewis' novel, Elmer Gantry. Gantry strides across the Protestant face of America in a demolishing portrait that, as one writer has said, should be required reading once a year by "all ministers, chaplains, religious teachers, and theological students."<sup>1</sup> And though the portrait is excessive, there is a portion of truth in it. Horton Davies summarizes this idea in his book, A Mirror of the Ministry in Modern Novels:

It is a sorry verdict on the ministry and the churches, if a tenth of the contention be true. But, true or not, Elmer Gantry is a formidable warning against hypocrisy, the cult of personality in the pulpit, and the temptations of mere elocution, and the dangers of a skin-deep and narrow Christian culture and education. It is for every individual reader to determine whether this

is a portrait or a caricature, a scare-crow or a case of "There but for the grace of God go I".<sup>2</sup>

Now three decades later, the "literary" ministers are more learned, more subtle, more sophisticated -- though an Elmer Gantry still pops up occasionally. In John Osborne's play, Epitaph for George Dillon, one of the characters, Geottrey Colwyn-Stuart (also a minister), discovers a new way of judging people, "I ask myself whether their lamps are shining." He then tells Dillon of a famous clergyman with a very strong lamp who seemingly never got tired because, as he had told his colleague, "I believe in every single word I utter." Colwyn-Stuart goes on to say of him, "You could see his lamp burning at the very back of the hall. He was on fire for what he believed in. And that's the secret."<sup>3</sup> This is, of course, pure Gantryism, the big, hearty, hot-eyed spellbinder, huckstering revival-type religion to the masses.

But this is an exception. The new Protestant clergyman of literature has intellectual pretensions, pretends to urbanity, and would be scornful of a bombastic boob like Elmer Gantry.

In De Vries' book, The Mackerel Plaza, the Reverend Andrew Mackerel is young and handsome, definitely a man of the world and determined to remain one, but primarily an intellectual aesthete and a snob. His concern on Sunday morning is not to deliver a message of a personal Savior to his suburbanite flock (one would hesitate to call them worshippers); he is concerned rather with delivering

intellectual discourses from the fertile mind of Andrew Mackerel, which only incidentally touch on religion. His best sermons contain Wilde-like epigrams, and one such, "It is the final proof of God's omnipotence that he need not exist in order to save us," so pleased his congregation that they promptly bought him a new car.

Reverend Mackerel's aesthetic sense is upset in the first pages of the book. A huge neon sign has been erected overnight, visible from Reverend Mackerel's study. It shamelessly proclaims: "JESUS SAVES." On the phone to City Hall, he launches the following:

Oscar Wilde reminds us that while crime is not vulgar, vulgarity is a crime. Jesus doesn't save any of these people, because all they want to do is boost their paltry souls into heaven, while completely shirking the obligation to evolve.

De Vries' satire is even more evident in his description of People's Liberal Church, "the first split-level church in America." Besides containing an all-purpose interior suitable as a dining area, a gymnasium, or a ballroom, there are various other rooms, plus a clinic "with medical and neuro-psychiatric wings, both indefinitely expandable." Hidden in the description is the mention of "a small worship area at one end."

The Swedish writer, Olov Hartman, portrays much the same kind of minister in his novel, Holy Masquerade. Pastor Albert Svensson is acquainted

with the latest European theology so that he may pretend to an orthodoxy which he does not follow. Like Mackerel, he has a wide knowledge of the latest thought in the social sciences, particularly psychology. This allows him an aesthetic "distance" in which to weigh his theological beliefs and to theorize brilliantly (though un-comfortingly) to members of his flock who come to him with problems. Like Mackerel, he is properly skeptical in the modern manner; and though tolerant of all beliefs, he is properly intolerant of dogma.

Similar up to this point, the two books now diverge. De Vries does his best writing in the first few pages. After that, except for an occasional bon mot, a choice passage here and there, the book goes downhill, and so does the reader's interest. The Reverend Mackerel bumbles about from one unlikely situation into another while the reader keeps hoping his interest will be recaptured. In fact, the second two-thirds of the book contains many of the same vitiating elements of one of the weaker Rock Hudson-Doris Day movies.

The Swedish novel is another matter. Though it may seem difficult to move from the gay world of Andrew Mackerel to the somber north of Albert Svensson, we do so gratefully. The reason we do is because of Albert Svensson's wife, Klara. When Albert married her, she was an atheist. But soon after their marriage she became interested in theology and soon became -- in her husband's eyes, at least -- a religious fanatic. As a matter of fact, we know that she has begun to search for an honest, clear, God-centered faith, and she cannot find it

in her husband's brand of Christianity. "For souls belong to the things that are not seen, Albert." As her faith increases, their marriage grows sour. Albert comments later: "I should have been warned by her inconsistency . . . she sought to embrace modern viewpoints and to defend a massive orthodoxy in preference to a more tolerant and liberal position." Finally when Klara, under the tension of their quarreling, avoids the conjugal bed, Albert begins to have sexual relations with the church organist.

After Klara's death, Albert finds her diary, a record of her spiritual growth (chapters of which comprise most of the book). At one place she had written: I have declared war against Albert's ambivalence, this faith that wants to be skepticism and modernity, this fast that gourmandizes, this morality that understands and forgives. Just before her death she had written: "It is strange, but I have had too much in common with Him to deny it. I believe in Him." Commenting on his wife's diary in the last chapter, Albert notes that such words bore the "marks of insanity," that "the critical modern man -- and she considered herself to be in this category -- certainly has little in common with Jesus."

As a matter of fact, it is Pastor Albert Svensson who is the "critical modern man," wary of religious enthusiasm, skeptical of faith, wholeheartedly committed only to his secular learning. He has adopted the unholy posture of a modern-day clergyman who attempts to accommodate the Bible to contemporary scientific and philosophic

thought. In startling contrast to this position is Klara's weak and fumbling but, at the same time, sure and steady walk toward faith in her Saviour, Jesus Christ. And therein lies the interest of the book.

- 1 Killinger, John. The Failure of Theology in Modern Literature (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1963), p. 154.
- 2 Davies, Horton. A Mirror of the Ministry in Modern Novels (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 34.
- 3 Osborne, John, and Creighton, Anthony. Epitaph for George Dillon. (London: Faber and Faber, 1958), pp. 46-47.

S. K. Lee

#### "NINETY-SIX PER CENT OF THE LUTHERANS"

The above title would seem to indicate that we are here confronted with a situation which spells almost complete unanimity. The reference, of course, is to last month's organization of the "Lutheran Council in the United States of America", which was effected by four bodies that comprise 96% of the Lutherans in America. It would indeed be an achievement calling for joyful and whole-hearted thanksgiving to God if the joining together in this new association represented a real meeting of hearts and minds on Scriptural doctrine and practice.

By the same token, if the "96%" means that majorities determine what is right and wrong, what is Scriptural or un-Scriptural, then the remaining unorganized and scattered 4% ought without delay get in step with the rest of Lutheranism in this country. That is the way the man in the street would interpret the publicity that has attended this latest Lutheran "milestone".

However, we must call attention to a few facets of this well-publicized Lutheran "accomplishment" which shed a different light on the whole picture. For one thing, it has nowhere been stated that the major Lutheran bodies forming this new council have become agreed in doctrine. There was a time, and that not too many years ago, when the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod could not even find a common basis for discussion of doctrine with the former United Lutheran Church, now the leading spirit in the newer Lutheran Church in America.<sup>1</sup> But the former American Lutheran Church could claim an agreement with both the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the United Lutheran Church on the very doctrine which divided the latter two, the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture.<sup>2</sup> There has been no report saying these bodies have now come to an agreement on this most fundamental doctrine. If there has been any change in doctrine, it has not been in the direction of conservatism.

Granted that the new Council has as one of its purposes, "to seek to achieve consensus in a systematic and continuing way on the basis of the Scriptures and the witness of the Lutheran Confessions", (ART IV, b) that still becomes a rather

meaningless reason for setting up this new organization when the members thereof have to establish special forums outside the Council before which doctrinal discussions can be carried on that should culminate in pulpit and altar fellowship.<sup>3</sup> There is good reason to believe that the aforementioned purpose was made a part of the organization platform to get the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod along in this new venture, since said synod had for a long time been saying that it could consider working and talking with others only if provision was made for the discussion of doctrine. Yet, what good purpose do such discussions in the Council serve if it is powerless to finalize them?

It should be no secret that while there are indeed elements, both conservative and liberal, in the several bodies which are in sympathy with their counterparts in the other bodies, the four Lutheran synods which are the charter members of this Council are far from agreed on quite a few doctrines. Yet, we find this given as the first purpose and objective of the new Council, "to further the witness, the work, and the interests of the participating bodies." (ART IV, a) It does not require any special degree of intelligence to see that by this article the conservative is committed and obligated to further the witness of the liberal: in other words, to compromise his testifying to the truth.

When one takes note of these factors and then looks at headlines like "96% of the Lutherans Organize", he begins to lose confidence in and respect for the whole venture. Yes, despite the noble sounding functions the Council is to perform, one wonders



whether it might not be the case that the dissenting 4% of the Lutherans are the more honest and consistent. Though these 4% may not all be agreed with each other, they are forthright enough to say with whom they are not agreed and to conduct themselves accordingly.

There is good reason to fear that the formation of this Council this past November, which is at the same time more conservative and more liberal than its predecessor, the former National Lutheran Council, was a black day for American Lutheranism. The nebulous platform of the Council and the obvious lack of doctrinal agreement between the Council members is bound to bring incalculable harm on all true Lutheranism. Nor is there much to keep this from happening when we remember that "96% of the Lutherans" in America are involved in this latest highly-publicized undertaking.

Those who belong to one of the minority Lutheran synods may take comfort in this that truth is not determined by majorities and that God's pure Word will prevail wherever it has the opportunity to sound forth. They should make certain, however, that if they are separate from the other Lutheran minorities, it is for reasons that are Scripturally valid. Their task will be the same it has always been — to keep the Word pure and to proclaim it in all its fulness whenever and wherever the opportunity presents itself. Though a seemingly insignificant minority, the 4% of the Lutherans can yet be the real "salt" of the Lutheran Church in this country — if they will remain faithful to this God-given obligation. 1967 should become a year for

their rededicating themselves to assume and to carry out this divine directive, "if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." (I Peter 4:11)

- <sup>1</sup> Cf the Missouri Synod's "Reports and Memorials for the Twenty-Second Delegate Synod", assembled at St. Louis, Missouri, June 15-25, 1938, p. 184.
- <sup>2</sup> Cf the "Pittsburgh Agreement" adopted by the Fellowship Commission of the ALC and the ULCA in 1939 and the "Common Confession" agreed on by the LC-MS and the ALC respectively in 1950.
- <sup>3</sup> Note, e.g., the parallel resolutions of the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches at its 1965 convention (# 65-08 and # 65-15) which on the one hand made the SELC a charter member of LCUSA and which on the other gave her a seat in the doctrinal discussions being carried on between the LC-MS and the present-day ALC, such a special forum being necessitated by the fact that LCUSA makes no provision for the finalization of the theological discussions carried on before its own forum.

M. H. Otto

#### CORRECTION

In the September 1966 issue, VOL. VII, No. 1, p. 11 the Greek phrase should be translated "as their own bodies", not "as his own body."